

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 IO-12

DPW-01 AID-20 EUR-25 OMB-01 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /139 W  
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R 231244 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9131

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL DANANG

USDEL FRANCE

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4855

EO 11652

TAGS PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT SITREP FOR MARCH 23, 1973

FOL SENT SAIGON FROM CAN THO MARCH 23 AND RPTD YOU FOR INFO QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 080

E. O. 11652

TAGS: MILI, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MARCH 23, 1973

1. SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY DROPPED AFTER YESTERDAY'S HIGH POINT. THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS DEPARTED TRI TON MARCH 23. THE VC REPORTEDLY HAVE REACTED TO ICCS INVESTIGATIONS IN BAC LIEU AND BA XX XUYEN.
2. SECURITY SITUATION: VC/NVA INITIATED INCIDENTS DROPPED FROM A TOTAL OF 85 ON MARCH 21 TO 41 ON MARCH 22, ABOUT THE SAME AS LAST WEEK. MOST OF THE INCIDENTS ARE STILL ATTACKS BY FIRE, (ABF). ACTIVITY WAS PRIMARILY CONCENTRATED IN THE HONG NGU AREA, WITH INCIDENTS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TAKING PLACE IN THE CAI CAI AREA OF KIEN PHONG AND TRI TON. THERE WERE TWO ABF AROUND HA TIEN. TERRORIST INCIDENTS CONTINUE TO AVERAGE 4 TO 5 PER DAY, MOSTLY MINES AND GRENADE ATTACKS.

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3. ICCS: THE POLISH AND HUNGARIAN ICCS TEAMS LEFT TRI TON MARCH 23 WITHOUT CONSULTING WITH THE CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS. THE REGION VII CANADIAN ICCS CHIEF BELIEVES THE VC/ NVA WILL NOW RESUME SHELLING TRI TON AND EVENTUALLY FORCE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE CANADIAN AND INDONESIAN CONTINGENTS. BOTH INTEND TO REMAIN AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. THE POLISH REGION VII DELEGATION CHIEF INFORMED REGION VII JMC IN WRITING THAT HIS TEAM WOULD RETURN TO TRI TON " WHEN SECURITY CAN BE GUARANTEED BY ALL FOUR PARTIES." IF THE ICCS WITHDRAWS COMPLETELY FROM TRI TON IT WILL BE A MAJOR SETBACK FOR THE PEACEKEEPING MACHINERY IN THE DELTA.

4. VC/ NVA ACTIVITY: (A) MILITARY: MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI, COMMANDING GENERAL OF MR IV, SAID MARCH 22 THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL NOT GAIN A PORT OF ENTRY IN THE DELTA. IN A CONVERSATION WITH CONGEN OFFICERS AT A FAREWELL FOR DRAC, HE CLAIMED THAT " HE OWNS" ALL THE POSSIBLE ENTRY POINTS IN MR IV AND THAT HIS FORCES ARE SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO THWART ANY VC/ NVA ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THEM. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED HA TIEN, TRI TON, HONG NGU AND THE BO DE RIVER IN AN XUYEN AS POINTS THE COMMUNISTS WOULD LIKE TO USE FOR RESUPPLY UNDER THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT HIS FORCES HAVE REPELLED PAST VC/ NVA ATTACKS AGAINST THE FIRST THREE, AND AN ARVN RANGER BATTALION STATIONED ON THE BO DE GUARANTEED THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO IMPORT ARMS THERE. ADMIRAL DINH MING HUNG, COMMANDER OF RIVERINE FORCES IN MR IV AND MR III, SEPARATELY COMMENTED TO A CONGEN OFFICER THAT HA TIEN, ALTHOUGH A GOOD PORT, HAS A RELATIVELY SHALLOW ENTRANCE MAKING IT UNSUITABLE FOR VESSELS DRAWING 3 METERS OR MORE. HE SAID THE BO DE RIVER WOULD BE THE BEST COASTAL PORT OF ENTRY FOR THE COMMUNISTS BUT THEY WON' T GET IT BECAUSE THE ARVN RANGER BN THERE HAS IT SECURED. THE CONGEN BELIEVES THE VC/ NVA ARE STILL TRYING TO OBTAIN A PORT OF ENTRY, AN OBJECTIVE THEY FAILED TO ACCOMPLISH IN THEIR OFFENSIVE AT THE TIME OF THE CEASEFIRE. ARVN WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO STOUTLY RESIST ITS ENEMY' S EFFORTS TO GAIN A PORT OF ENTRY. (B) THE BAC LIEU VIS CHIEF SAID MARCH 21 THAT THE VIET CONG ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ICCS INVESTIGATION OF THE MARCH 6 GIA RAI DISTRICT TOWN SHELLING WHICH WOUNDED NINE CIVILIANS. HE SAID THE VC WERE TELLING PEOPLE IN GIA RAI DISTRICT THAT THE ACTUAL TARGET WAS AN OUTPOST NEXT TO THE TOWN. THE VIET CONG, HE SAID, URGED THE PEOPLE NOT TO BLAME THE INCIDENT ON THEM. INTERESTINGLY, THE ONLY SIGNIFIC  
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\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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